
How Does Leadership Influence On Creativity

1,500 word essay discussing the style of leadership you think maximizes creativity and innovation.

Business Leadership, whether it's seen as a transformational process or as an interaction of innate personal characteristics, doesn't have a still pattern, or a unique style.

It has been given various interpretations by organizational theorists, contemporary thinkers, psychologists over the past decades. Its interpretation has been varying even more over the 10 last years as business and capitalistic models have been shifting.

Effective leadership is defined as the ability of foreseeing opportunities in the surrounding environment, and the ability of turning this potential into existence.

It builds up on various interpersonal capacities such as intelligence, integrity, sense of organization, ambition, flexibility, empathy, adding to these: the mysterious capacity to foster imagination and creativity. It's not surprising that the 2010 global CEO survey conducted by IBM throughout 1500 CEO selected Creativity as the most important criterion to be instilled in successful organizations.

Indeed, organizations are continually challenged by their environment: outnumbered competitors, elaborated regulation, rapidly changing technologies, complex value chain, evasive business models, demanding clients, heavy human resources management, etc.

In order to keep up with this fast moving environment, leaders need to anticipate and make their organizations evolve rapidly and cyclically from their actual level to the upper one, hence achieving Progress, Differentiation and Innovation. Indeed, effective leaders have the magical ability of instilling ambition, broad-mindedness, creativity and flexibility into their organization, thus, providing a fertile ground to generate as many ideas and programs likely to challenge status quo. How do managers infuse creativity in their organization? By creating initiatives, organizing internal rewarded challenges, brainstorming products and services, adopting new technologies, connecting departments, involving employees (especially the introverted one)-, sharing intelligently proposed problems and solutions, sharing the network's best practices, by bringing the customers and the work force to meet. Innovation doesn't come in once (except in very rare occasions), but it builds up through stages, through the correction and the enhancement of an initial idea.

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Effective leadership unleashes the potential within organization in the way Socrates' Maieutic Method facilitated answering proposed problems and enhancing ideas by encouraging critical thinking.

As far as I am concerned, I never really considered the problematic of leadership; I mostly wanted to become a good manager. Besides, I was locked for a long time in a strong conventional "squared side" that left little room for flexibility and creativity. I needed a major turmoil to drive me off my "conventional" limits, and to make me apprehend leadership. My latest professional experience turned to be that turmoil; I ended embodying a position stronger than expected.

My professional life as "a leader to emerge" begun in 2011, when I joined a family business (in manufacturing and distribution) in "C". The company was undergoing a major change of governance: its founder (CEO and managing director) left suddenly in 2010, and left behind various unsolved issues. Shareholders, needed an insider to assist the management in reorganizing the company.

My involvement started with performing extensive data analysis of the past years. At the end of which, I concluded that the company needed to restructure its data production processes, calling for the formalization of policies, existing risks, controls and reporting system; and started to build it up.

During the process, I expected managers to follow because on the one hand, the system to be implemented was necessary and correctly built on; and because on the other hand, I was supporting the implementation through hard work and consuming argumentations.

Yet, resistance showed up quickly: unanswered emails and reminders, missing reporting, unperformed data control, bad faith, fake problems, and conflicts. People aligned themselves against the change and "my" system.

As I stepped back, I realized that the implementation needed more delicacy and creativity than expected, considering the setting of the company: the corporate culture was fossilizing as the average seniority reaches 15 years, the function has never been embodied and the idea of formal controls was scaring.

I had to find another way to make the change happen, and it was threefold.

Firstly, I convinced shareholders about a technological change: a switch from sage 100 to the ERP sage X3, a high performing system that mitigates the majority of risks and controls identified, automates several tasks and contains several smart analytical tools. This project had

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the great benefit of bringing us all together to sit around a table; it brought in stimulating discussions and created new dynamics in the organization.

Secondly, I worked on myself: I tried to be less rigid, yet kept on being persistent, I worked harder (the first one to arrive and the last to leave), I stopped giving credit to “fake problems”, applied myself to listening to what’s said and what’s not said, I recognized people’s expertise in what they do, while abiding myself to always look positive. I mainly learnt to ignore the blocking points/ persons, at the end of the journey, either they follow up or they stay behind and end up left over.

Thirdly, I found new ways to infuse creativity and dynamism in the organization.

The context of the company and my involvement enabled me to interact with its vast network. Internally, I interacted with all the departments. Externally, I interacted with business and financial partners, with customers and prospects, with suppliers during visits of factories in China and Europe, with high skilled manager during product launches, etc.

During this process, I realized that the company needed renewal; it needed to be rebranded again.

Renewing and rebranding were somehow easy because on the one hand, the company has a real potential (history, reputation, sector, partners and sustainable investment policy) and because on the other hand, the company has an important network of partnerships : big successful innovative organizations such as X,Y, Z who transmit a lot of creativity, dynamism and knowledge to their distributors (the company) as part of their business model, one just needed to well absorb and capitalize on this creative energy and broadcast it in their own environment.

Hence, I started challenging (and exciting) the Sales & Marketing team, and we started building up ideas from each other’s ideas: new products and brands , new services, new website, broadening the scope of marketing actions: development of the concept of the open days, coverage of new events (at the least possible cost), internal and external sales challenges, internal and external communication. Thus, I seized opportunities to seize the press. Between 2012 and 2013: Tens of articles were issued in local newspaper flattering the dynamism of the company and its business model.

I also took the initiative and led the introduction of new brands to the company portfolio (such as B ,, C and D).

Today, I am thrilled to see how much dynamism is revealed. I see it in action during meetings,

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when everyone is trying to build on the other's idea and improve it. At the end of the meeting, the idea is no one's and it's everyone's. I am all the more thrilled to see people taking initiatives, to hear partners, customers and competitors flattering the evolution of the company.

Leadership in a fossilized corporate culture can be difficult and solitary; however, when it manages to instill energy and creativity while challenging the resources, it becomes effective and powerful. In my own experience, technological change, and the use of the company's business network proved to be great vectors to bring in creativity back. I also learned that people dare, when creatively challenged. However, In order to challenge them, one's code of conduct must be irreproachable.

Nowadays leadership is definitely about inspiring the people into thinking renewal, achieving gradual progress and finally reaching innovation.

Bill Gates is putting it best, "Never before in history has innovation offered promise of so much to so many in such a short time."

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